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OUR TIN WEDDING—THE CENTENNIAL.

WHETHER marriage is properly to be regarded as the blessed event which it is considered by one-half the world, or as the fatal misfortune which it is called by something less than the other half—certain it is, that much more than the half have agreed to consider it an occasion worth after-celebration in festivals holding various intervals of distance from each other. So far as generally understood, the initial event is not worth celebrating at all, until five years have gone by without either of the parties eloping from the once-loved presence or committing such bodily or verbal assaults upon the marital partner as to make their disagreement a matter of notoriety. This first and mildest of the celebrations, after only five years, is known as the "Wooden Wedding;" and all the gifts brought by felicitating friends are expected to be ligneous in their character, embracing washing-tubs, ax-helves, saw-bucks, clothes-pins, ladles, bread-trays, cradles and the like; though an exception is occasionally made in favor of a piano, on the ground that wood enters somewhat largely into the composition of that instrument. It is likewise understood that on such a festive occasion, the parties who have only for that brief time kept their matrimonial contract, are not (using a common but very significant expression) to "put on too many airs," as married people of advanced age or long experience. Five years later, a second festival occurs, in the "Tin Wedding," with the presents understood to be all of that harder but more flexible material derived from the Cornish mines, necessarily running into the direction of pails and pans, and the happy couple allowed to bear themselves with a trifle more of assurance, as having longer braved the difficulties of union and given a little additional proof that they both mean and are able to live together for a considerable period. Passing over the nondescript affairs which the greedy and the impatient have sometimes managed to interpolate, so to speak, without any titles, at fifteen and twenty years from the marriage day,—the third legitimate occasion comes when twenty-five years have elapsed, when children may be grown up around the knees of the couple who have thus long remained together, and when they may indeed be grandparents. This occasion, really possessing a meaning, in the proof of endurance and at least reasonable compatibility which it affords, is called the "Silver Wedding"; and guests who appear at it are expected to signify their sense of its value by bringing nothing less pure and costly than the argentiferous metal, in all its varieties from tea-spoons to full table services. Any lack of dignity in position, visible in the married partners in the Wooden and Tin affairs, is now amply supplied; they have done something, they have borne something, they amount to something, not only in their own estimation but in that of their little world of friends and admirers. Another long interval—a very long one, covering as much space as that between the marriage ceremony and the occasion last alluded to—and after fifty years of union comes the "Golden Wedding." A proud occasion, indeed!—proud as rare. The gifts are to be of gold, now; but golden indeed must have been the bond holding two hearts and two lives together for that half-century; and well may the couple most concerned, gray-haired, perhaps stooping, and possibly great-grandparents, hold themselves to be, in no limited sense, of the "salt of the earth" in usefulness and endurance, and worthy of being thus honorably surrounded and ministered to. There is yet another—the "Diamond Wedding;" not in the sense intended by Stedman in his capital poem, but marking the rare instances in which the supremely blessed couple have lingered together for five-and-seventy years, necessarily standing on the verge of their centenary. Alas!—the demand for golden plate and ornaments for the occasion last preceding may come but seldom; but how seldom indeed is there need to purchase a brilliant for this last and crowning recognition of the possible!—as, indeed, how keen a mockery would be such an event,

if it occurred even oftener, with the priceless gems held out to eyes too dim to see them, and the echoes from the land beyond the flood, sounding much more plainly to the waiting ears than the felicitations of friends and descendants!

Holding this practice and these periods in view, let us glance very briefly at the Centenary of American Independence, now commencing to absorb all minds and to control much of public action—at its surroundings, its omens and its prophecies. We are a very young nation—very young indeed—the very youngest on the globe, unless we consider Italy as only lately having emerged from the chaos of division and become a complete member of the national family. Beside that Iceland, which a few months ago held what might be called its "Diamond Wedding" of one thousand years, we are but the merest of upstarts, however sturdy and promising. Beside any one of the nations of Europe, we can only be considered as standing in tutelage. We have really been linked together, as a nation, so little while, that it is doubtful whether our "Wedding" occasion could not properly be called a "Wooden" one, the very lowest of all; but let courtesy have its full measure, and let it be designated the "Tin," at least a trifle more dignified in its standing. And, so much conceded, what are our surroundings, and what have we really accomplished, to give us right for wholesale felicitation? Our ancestors entered upon a wild and unknown continent, two hundred and fifty to three hundred years ago; and up to the time of our Independence, they pursued the usual course of colonists, holding the lands they had acquired, with the countenance and assistance of the countries from which they had been derived or which held territorial dominion over the lands where they chanced to be located. With the Declaration of Independence and the successful struggle which made that declaration a reality, the former period closed: from that time and from that time only, the national existence is to be calculated.

We have grown rich and populous. True: we had a wide extent of territory; the older countries were swarming, needing additional space and additional opportunity, which our continent could so well supply. In this, the story of rapidly increasing population is told; and there is really not much matter for national pride in it, one of the laws of nature, involving the vacuum and its filling, the demand and its supply, having only been carried out as it might have been by a mere dumb force. Wealth could not well do otherwise than come to us, with so many square acres of rich land to every inhabitant, with such amounts of the precious metals as have revealed themselves and to some extent developed themselves; with all the strengths and favorable conditions of youth in our favor; and with none of the embarrassing remains from the past, inevitable with nations passing through much longer periods and more enduring struggles. *We have become a power in the political world.* True: a power of peculiar position and virtual isolation. What we are, in that regard, we have become through that position, combined with the mere inert force of territory, and without any considerable assistance from diplomacy or legislation, in the former of which we have generally been little less than contemptible, and in the latter of which we have usually been dealing for sections and classes, to almost entire forgetfulness of the welfare of the whole. *We have done wonders in invention.* True: the exigencies of a new and wide-spread country have wonderfully spurred the inventive faculty, while the influx of people from all the nations of the Old World has brought in to us that blending of practical intellect, and that opportunity for comparison as to plans and processes, which no other nation has ever enjoyed. In labor-saving inventions we stand pre-eminent. But how far this fact redounds to our credit, and how far it merely shows the wish to perform a certain work with as little labor as possible, may be some time a subject of amused inquiry. And more than half of what we have invented, we have by no means perfected as have some of the nations of the Old World. *We have proved our will and our power to remain a nation, through two international conflicts, and one internecine struggle of immense proportions.* True: to a certain extent. The first of the two struggles with Great Britain does not properly come into the calculation; it was part of the throes of our birth. The second was of very limited reach, bringing out few resources on either side, and with our then enemy hampered and crippled by the wars of the continent, almost to

the degree of helplessness. It is too early, as yet, to speak calmly of the internecine struggle; but it is not too early to say that the less spoken of it in the way of self-glorification, the better and the wiser. At the best, it was the somewhat slow and difficult defeating of a much weaker antagonist; and how far it has proved our determination and power to remain one united country, can better be answered twenty years hence than at present—answered when we shall have ascertained, through the course of later legislation, whether we really desire to resume the old status of friendly members of one compact, or whether personal or sectional profit is to be made the dominant object, no matter what other persons or sections suffer or become destroyed.

Honestly, some of these things had better receive calm and self-examining thought, before entering upon the reception of the other peoples of the world, at our "Tin Wedding." We have no especial cause for shame, on the whole, as to the results of our one hundred years: nay, we have much for pride. But we need to remember, in receiving our guests and the "tin" which it is at least to be hoped that they will bring us—(1) that we have enough deficiencies, as compared to opportunities, notably to modify our arrogant consciousness of that which we really possess; (2) that the nations visiting us are materially sharers in any glory which we may have acquired—their former subjects, with the idioms of their languages not yet worn from their tongues, having been among the sturdiest and most beneficial workers in securing any and all of our grand results; and (3) that, however hopeful we may be of the future, and however staunchly every true American is determined to struggle, and labor, and reason, to make that future glorious, we have as yet by no means proved our capacity to put down national weaknesses and temperamental vices, in such degree as to assure the world of our capacity to maintain the blessed union of good will, helpfulness, and national homogeneity, beyond the "Tin Wedding" stage so closely following the mere nuptials, up to the "Silver" of three times the period, the fine "Gold" of yet longer endurance, or the true "Diamond" of half a score of centuries.

—The Editor.

A BIRD OF PASSAGE.

As the day's last light is dying,
As the night's first breeze is sighing,
I send you, love, like a messenger dove, my thought through the distance flying!
'Tis a bird that in plume and sinew
Is strong as the truth within you;
'Tis a bird as white as the faith you plight with the lover so proud to win you!

I bid it speed till it meet you,
Then fluttering downward, greet you,
With a coo perchance, or with glowing glance that softly seems to entreat you!
Let it perch on your sill; or better,
Let it feel your frail hand's fetter,
For under its wing it shall surely bring love, hidden away like a letter!

—Edgar Fawcett.

BYRON'S LAST EFFORT.

"The manner of it—
To see it in a play would break your heart,
It was so pitiless."

So long as time continues to unfold his varied and instructive scroll, will the genius of Byron enchain the sympathies of all who possess intellects capable of appreciating the grandeur of his muse and the towering magnificence of his imagery. Alas! that while this remains the case, there must ever likewise remain a world-wide sorrow that the dark spectre of his domestic sufferings should so constantly arise to cast a funereal gloom over all otherwise so bright in his being and his genius!

In 1822 Lord Byron was in Italy. Surfeited with pleasure and renown, he yet wandered about from place to place, a broken-hearted and hopeless exile. Still so young, so handsome, and so brimful of the limpid waters of Castalia, there was yet one person living who could have rekindled hope in his throbbing bosom and restored him with matured powers to himself and the world. That person was Lady Byron.

In the winter of 1822-3, she also went to Italy, to spend the season at the fashionable resort of Nice, then a part of the Italian dominions. She traveled incognito, and her journeys and abiding-places while on the continent were known only to a few of her

intimate acquaintances. The poet, however, through some one of his numerous friends, heard of her arrival at Nice. His great heart bounded with renewed hope. His mighty spirit, so seldom bowed, bent with the desire to receive once more the embraces of his family and to be thenceforward their faithful protector and companion.

Years had passed since the poet and his wife had seen each other, and the heart of Byron was effectually softened. He had realized the force of the touching words: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." Who can picture the hopes and fears which racked the mind of Byron at this period? Did he fancy that Lady Byron, as might easily have been imagined, had come to Italy to increase the chances of meeting with him, and of effecting a reconciliation between them, which would forever have redounded to the honor of her nature and proclaimed the tenderness of her disposition? Did he impulsively conclude that if he could once more meet her and speak confidentially with her, all would yet be well? Did he behold visions, in the future, of a happy home and a loving family crowning the glory of a mighty fame?

Whatever were his thoughts, hopes or fears, he resolved to see her, and if possible surprise her into the opportunity of a reconciliation. And now, casting away every feeling of pride, and every fear that might have seemed an impediment to his honorable and noble design, he hastened to Nice, evidently with this one thought dwarfing all others in his ardent nature.

Arriving at the hotel where Lady Byron was domiciled, his plans were soon matured; and all who are familiar with the peculiarities of the poet's nature, will perceive how highly characteristic they were of his disposition, however out of the common order — as indeed was not he under all circumstances and always? He resolved to surprise her by suddenly appearing before her in a livery similar to that of the servant who waited upon her. No doubt he presumed that such temporarily assumed humiliation, and the unconquerable desire to meet her which it must evidence, would have the effect of materially influencing her favorably toward him, especially when joined to the magnetic power of his presence and the eloquence of his address. The sequel sadly proved that by following these generous and impetuous impulses, he had wholly miscalculated the result as well as the subject of the effort.

Having procured a suit of livery and bribed the chief servant of the hotel to allow him to take the place of the attendant who answered Lady Byron's bell, when she next rang it he quickly appeared before her. As may be supposed, she was amazed — thunderstruck — but alas! unrelenting as ever! Perceiving that he was recognized, Byron hastily expressed his joy at seeing her, begged her forgiveness, promised in the future to atone for all the faults and follies of the past, and at last implored that she would speak to him, if only one single word. His appeal, however, was lost — worse than idle. Unmoved as a marble statue, her features pale and rigid, she violently rang the bell beside her, and thus summoning the servants of the house, abruptly terminated the interview by ordering her husband's forcible expulsion from her presence. From that time, more than ever before, Byron's mighty spirit was effectually broken; he found himself now indeed without hope in the world; and in a state of dejection and dismay, such as few men have ever suffered, he retired to commune more sadly than ever with his immortal muse, and the more dangerous personifications supplying its alternative.

Lady Kavanagh, who was then at Nice, occupying apartments adjoining those of Lady Byron, with whom she was especially intimate, communicated these circumstances to her niece, Mrs. Jane Kelly, of Stradbally, Queens County, Ireland; and they are well known to the children of that lady, who now reside in the American city of Brooklyn.

Lady Kavanagh was in her own apartments when the occurrence took place; and being attracted by the unusual noise and bustle which it created, she proceeded to inquire the cause, thus coming almost immediately after into the presence of Lady Byron. Ten minutes could not have elapsed after the expulsion of Lord Byron, before Lady Kavanagh was present with her, alone, and heard a recital of the incident from the lady's own lips. Lady Kavanagh described her as having been in a state of nervous agitation, complaining of the cruelty of the shock which the occurrence had inflicted on her, but uttering not one word of sympathy for her forsaken

husband — not one solitary reflection on the stern severity of her conduct toward him. Whether she ever expressed, or indeed experienced, at any subsequent time, either regret for her reception of Byron on this affecting occasion, or sympathy with his broken and hopeless condition, will now probably forever remain unknown; but judging from the incident itself, as well as from others in her biography, such feelings had slight if any affinity with her general character and disposition. Yet it is difficult to conceive of a heart in which such remembrances might not at some unsuspected moment strike a latent chord of tenderness. Whether they did so or not, the words of the poet who exclaims,

"Too late. You've crushed the light out of a gem
You did not know the price of. Had you spoken
But one kind word —"

seem to have a singular application to the incident.

But even this was not the end. However broken and almost hopeless, Lord Byron did not discontinue his personal effort at reconciliation, even with so lamentable a failure to discourage him. He probably felt that the surprise might have been too much for Lady Byron's nervous system, and that after time for calm reflection she might possibly regret the inexorable course she had pursued, and perhaps gladly embrace a similar opportunity if it should be again offered. At all events, soon afterward the illustrious poet again "stooped to conquer" what, alas! seems to have been unconquerable. On this second occasion he disguised himself as a coachman, and succeeded in mounting her carriage. His success, however, was no better than before; for no sooner had Lady Byron become aware of his identity, than she vehemently and unflinchingly repudiated him, again firmly declining to hold even one moment's intercourse with him.

It was Lady Kavanagh who likewise related this circumstance, and further alleged that her authority for it, as for the other, was Lady Byron herself, who seemed rather proud than regretful at the attitude which she had thus maintained.

Lady Byron soon afterward left Italy, and traveling through France returned to England. With her after-history, this hasty sketch has no connection. There have not been wanting those who considered her mentality somewhat disordered, either through temperament or the agitations of her marital troubles; and in the light of such a supposition she might be judged with otherwise impossible leniency.

Byron also left Italy the following year, but not for England. The land of his childhood knew him no more. He sailed for Greece, no doubt first seeking the inspiration of the old Hellenic land, but to become, later, though so briefly, a sharer in one of the most praiseworthy enterprises of his century — the attempt to free the land of Spartan valor and Homeric song. There, beyond doubt, his muse received fresh and if possible more exalted inspiration; but there, all too soon, he breathed forth his lofty even if misguided spirit, passing to that yet more distant land where the pains and troubles of mortality are unknown, and where there are those who believe that the trifling errors of this fitful life are magnanimously forgiven.

— George W. Clarke.

THE SADDEST FATE.

To touch a broken lute,
To strike a jangled string,
To strive with tones forever mute
The dear old tune to sing, —
What sadder fate could any heart befall?
Alas! dear child, never to sing at all!

To sigh for pleasures flown,
To weep for withered flowers;
To count the blessings we have known,
Lost with the vanished hours, —
What sadder fate could any heart befall?
Alas! dear child, ne'er to have known them all!

To dream of love and rest,
To know the dream has past,
To bear within an aching breast
Only a void at last, —
What sadder fate could any heart befall?
Alas! dear child, ne'er to have loved at all!

To trust an unknown good,
To hope, but all in vain;
Over a far-off bliss to brood,
Only to find it pain, —
What sadder fate could any soul befall?
Alas! dear child, never to hope at all!

— Kate Hillard.

FLOWER THOUGHTS AND FANCIES.

SOMEBODY says that flowers are the "fugitive poetry of nature;" and to wild flowers most eminently belongs the remark. Our cultivated flowers can not be called "fugitive poetry;" we do not find them scattered along the roadsides, smiling to the brooks, nodding on hills to every breeze. Not they! They are collected and placed in our houses and conservatories, labeled, and surrounded by the costly accessories which belong to all volumes of collected poetry.

But with wild flowers it is different. We come upon them, indeed, as upon scraps of poetry tucked into the corner of some newspaper of every-day life, and in the one case, as in the other, exclaim in a sort of patronizing surprise: "Why, how pretty that is!"

One can not, however, be very well acquainted with the woodlands, without quickly losing any feeling of patronage he may once have had. There are so many dainty wild blossoms to harmonize with any mood in which they may be approached, beheld, or gathered.

We find all sorts of poetry speaking from them; palest of blue hare-bells, which suggest a dainty poem, full of tenderness without strong passion, which, indeed, they, as well as people, are better without. Then there are violets, blue and white and yellow, like little ballads, tales of unconscious heroines; gill-over-the-ground, immediately reminding one of scores of verses he has seen in the neglected corner of some country paper; with blue bits of prettiness scattered here and there, but so small that one doesn't care for the trouble of hunting them out; and besides, like those scraps of verse, there is so much of it that it can be had at any time.

But flowers, also, tell us other things; they are vivid reminders of people we have known, of faces we have seen, hearts we have learned to love and trust.

Who can ever see a valley-lily, without a feeling of tender greeting, or (to go from the pretty to the absurd) who can look at one of those saucy Jack-in-the-pulpits, peeping up out of its green sheath, and not expect it to speak, and in an oration as long as a country minister's, tell of its relationship to the regal calla? Poor relations, truly! How indignant the calla would be!

Then there are the lovely blossoms of the spring-beauty, at which one feels as much surprise as at finding a Perdita in a shepherd's cottage.

The flowers of the mullein are like families in a tenement house, pretty enough individually, but collectively — well, they'd be rather unpleasant guests, to say the least of it.

Autumn flowers are like stories of the tropics. Their very names are suggestive — golden-rod, flaming-pinxter, trumpet-flowers.

And water-lilies! what shall we say of them? Lovely, tearful Undines, gifted with souls through unavoidable wretchedness. And, by the way, what a beautiful allegory that is, and alas! how true to life.

But if water-lilies have souls, woodland vines certainly have no conscience. Running along the ground, climbing up trees, clinging to fences, making use of anything and everything, without so much as "By your leave," and to be shunned like parasitical friends, which, like them, once given a footing, can not easily be removed.

It is quite a pretty amusement to trace in flowers resemblances to one's friends. We have often heard people say that every human being is like some animal, — (if so, some of them are certainly only fossil remains, which, by the way, has nothing to do with the subject).

The resemblance of every one to some flower is quite as easily traceable. Bright, insipid verbenas, queenly lilies, royal japonicas. The readers of romance are familiar with heroines who are like them all, and can find among their friends the same characteristics.

How people's dispositions show forth in their favorite flowers! Some care only for roses, seeing no beauty, smelling no perfume in anything else. Such people are apt to be singularly pure in life and actions, tender in all loves and friendships, but exclusive in everything. Hosts of people prefer pansies, and are justly indignant with the writer who said that they always reminded him of monkey faces. Love-in-idleness, heartsease, thoughts, — certainly there never was a flower with so many pet names. People of liberal tastes have, of course, their favor-